

ED410846 1997-00-00 Higher Education Leadership: Analyzing the Gender Gap. ERIC Digest.

ERIC Development Team

www.eric.ed.gov

Table of Contents

If you're viewing this document online, you can click any of the topics below to link directly to that section.

Higher Education Leadership: Analyzing the Gender Gap. ERIC Digest.....	1
WHAT ARE THE ISSUES OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT?.....	2
WOMEN AND MEN LEADERS: DIFFERENT OR ALIKE?.....	2
DOES THE GENDER GAP MATTER?.....	3
THE GLASS CEILING IN HIGHER EDUCATION.....	3
IMPLICATIONS TO THE INSTITUTION.....	3
REFERENCES.....	4



ERIC Identifier: ED410846

Publication Date: 1997-00-00

Author: Chliwniak, Luba

Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education Washington DC.| BBB32577 _ George Washington Univ. Washington DC. Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

Higher Education Leadership: Analyzing the Gender Gap. ERIC Digest.

THIS DIGEST WAS CREATED BY ERIC, THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

INFORMATION CENTER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ERIC, CONTACT
ACCESS ERIC 1-800-LET-ERIC
WHERE'S THE GENDER GAP?

Only 16% of college and university women are presidents, only 13% of chief business officers are women, and only 25% of chief academic officers are women. Yet, women comprise more than 52% of the current student body. While colleges and universities are dominated by male leadership, however, concerns regarding administrative procedures that exclude women and create chilly campus climates continue to plague academic institutions. Many believe that by closing the leadership gap, institutions would become more centered on process and persons (described as feminized concerns) rather than focused on tasks and outcomes (attributed to masculine styles of leadership).

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT?

Most of us are intellectually aware of the complexity of women's situation and recognize that it needs to be viewed in a broad historical context of inclusion and exclusion. By exploring women's place in higher education institutions historically and currently, the lack of women's leadership is analyzed to determine the reasons for the gap and persistence factors in maintaining the gap.

Societal and organizational conceptions of leadership vary according to authors' assumptions. However, it is a common notion that leaders are individuals who provide vision and meaning for an institution and embody the ideals toward which the organization strives. Five common frames of reference for organizational structures inform us that leadership within these structures are traditionally conceived. Most conceptions of organizations assume that leadership emanates from the apex of a hierarchy. A sixth frame, A Web of Inclusion, is offered as an alternative, feminized frame of reference.

WOMEN AND MEN LEADERS: DIFFERENT OR ALIKE?

A problematic issue is that leadership traditionally has been studied using male norms as the standard for behaviors. As noted by Desjardins, Acker, Gutek, and others, women adopted male standards of success to better fit into male-dominated hierarchical structures and systems. Traditional scholars, such as Birnbaum and Mintzberg, view leaders as being alike and genderless. However, scholars such as Barrie Thorne and Deborah Tannen, who research gender differences, posit that social norms and issues of gender-role ascription create differences between women and men.

Carol Gilligan's research on cognitive development has provided impetus for many of

today's scholars to explore and revise leadership as we knew it. Gilligan argues that a single model of reasoning patterns and stages of moral development fails to capture the different realities of women's lives. By offering two different modes of reasoning patterns, a more complex but better understandable explanation for the human experience would also be more inclusive. Sally Helgesen, for example, examines how women chief executive officers make decisions, gather and dispense information, delegate tasks, structure their organizations, and motivate their employees. She concludes that women leaders place more emphasis on relationships, sharing, and process, while male CEOs, as per Mintzberg's studies, focus on completing tasks, achieving goals, hoarding of information, and winning. Gilligan's work identified a separate development pathway that results in personal and relational responsibility being of highest value for females and legalistic justice for individuals being highest for males. Therefore, as described by several authors, while men are more concerned with systems and rules, women are more concerned with relations and atmosphere.

DOES THE GENDER GAP MATTER?

Many authors have produced scholarship surrounding women's way of knowing compared with men's way of knowing. Recent scholarship speculates how these gender differences impact on the values held by leaders, and how these values influence institutional structures and infrastructures. If styles and approaches are indistinguishable between women and men, the gender gap is a numerical inequity and should be corrected for ethical reasons. But, if leadership approaches are different, the gender gap may represent an impediment to potential institutional improvements.

THE GLASS CEILING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Through intact male-dominated structures, men in organizations have come to view their perspectives and norms as being representative of gender-neutral, human organizational structures, and assume the structure is "asexual." Sheppard found that these male filters render women's experiences as invisible. Subtle, indirect obstacles as a result of labeling or stereotyping place stumbling blocks in the career paths of many women. Cultural artifacts in higher education, such as tenure-track standards, pedagogical practices, marginalizing of certain studies and scholarship, apparently preserve "appropriate" and different spheres for men and women in academe. A remedial vision--that is, one that is not seen through the eyes of only males--would add depth and new perspectives for shared images of posthierarchical institutional structures in higher education.

IMPLICATIONS TO THE INSTITUTION

Organizational culture effects curriculum and administration in that resources are allocated based on the values of the institution. Several scholars contend that a leader with an emerging, inclusive style of leadership could provide an institution with new values and ethics grounded in cooperation, community, and relationships within the

community. Higher education's leadership also needs to become more reflective of the constituents it serves.

Several actions that can be taken to bring about this change. Clearly, it is easier to promote change when in a position of authority. Transformational leadership develops organizational consensus and empowers those who are like-minded in their goals. Further, since patriarchy has been organized through men's relationships with other men, a similar unity among women is an effective means by which to combat institutionalized forms and norms that exclude women. And, regardless of position, women in higher education need to become more aware when the sense of being a marginal member or an unequal member of the academy impedes performance. A first step in this process is the elimination of campus micro-inequities, those behaviors and actions which create a chilly campus climate for women and minority groups.

It is important to remain vigilant to the effects of organizational norms, structures, and systems for many of the issues encompassed within the gender gap are a result of systems and not individuals. However, because they are only systems, they can be examined and changed. Furthermore, of most importance in the process of change is the recognition that equality cannot be externally assigned until it has been internally perceived by institutional members. By attending to traditional institutional practices such as exclusionary tenure criteria, sexual harassment, and wage gaps, incremental but effective changes can reshape institutional culture, and the associated images of leaders and leadership in higher education.

REFERENCES

- Desjardins, C. 1989. "Gender Issues in Community College Leadership." AAWCJC Journal: 5-10.
- Gilligan, C., J.V. Ward, and J.M. Taylor, eds. 1988. Mapping the Moral Domain: A Contribution of Women's Thinking to Psychological Theory and Education. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Pearson, C.S., D.L. Shavlik, and J.G. Touchton. eds. 1989 Educating the Majority: Women Challenge Tradition in Higher Education. New York: American Council on Education, Macmillan.
- Ross, M., M.F. Green, C. Henderson. 1993. The American College President: A 1993 Edition. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education.

This ERIC digest is based on a full-length report in the ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report series Volume 25, Number 4, Higher Education Leadership: Analyzing the Gender Gap by Luba Chliwniak.

This publication was partially prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no.

RR-93-002008. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the department.

Title: Higher Education Leadership: Analyzing the Gender Gap. ERIC Digest.

Note: For the full report, see HE 030 421.

Document Type: Information Analyses---ERIC Information Analysis Products (IAPs) (071); Information Analyses---ERIC Digests (Selected) in Full Text (073);

Target Audience: Administrators, Practitioners

Available From: ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports, The George Washington University, One Dupont Circle, Suite 630, Washington, DC 20036-1183; phone: 800-773-3742; fax: 202-452-1844; e-mail: eriche@eric-he-edu (\$1).

Descriptors: Administrative Organization, Administrative Policy, Colleges, Consciousness Raising, Diversity (Faculty), Equal Opportunities (Jobs), Females, Higher Education, Leadership, Organizational Change, Power Structure, Quality of Working Life, Sex Discrimination, Sex Fairness, Sex Role, Sex Stereotypes, Universities, Women Administrators, Women Faculty, Work Environment

Identifiers: ERIC Digests, Gender Gap, Glass Ceiling, University of Michigan

###



[\[Return to ERIC Digest Search Page\]](#)